

# Youth Action Plan 2026–29



WAIMAKARIRI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## A word from the Mayor

**Young people are vital to the future of the Waimakariri District. They bring energy, ideas, challenge, creativity and hope, and they deserve a district that not only welcomes them but actively supports them to build their lives here.**

This Youth Action Plan is a significant and proud milestone for our District. It reflects a clear commitment to ensuring Waimakariri is a place where young people aged 12 to 24 feel they belong, are heard, and can see real opportunities for their future. We want our young people to stay, to return, and to choose Waimakariri as the place where they live, work, learn and contribute.

To shape this Plan, we asked young people directly what matters most to them. They told us about employment and training opportunities, social connection, safe and welcoming places and spaces, mental health and wellbeing, transport, sport, and cultural opportunities.

This engagement represents the largest youth consultation ever undertaken by the Council, and the depth, honesty and thoughtfulness of the feedback has been both powerful and instructive.

What makes this work particularly important is that it does not sit on a shelf. The insights gathered through this process will inform programmes, policies and investment decisions across Council for many years to come. The Youth Action Plan will guide real, practical action and shape how we plan for our District's future with young people at the centre.

This work has also drawn strong interest and respect from partner organisations and stakeholders, who recognise the value of listening directly to young people and responding to what they have told us. In that sense, this Plan sets a benchmark not only for engagement, but for accountability and results.

On behalf of Council, I thank every young person who took the time to share their views, experiences and aspirations. Your voices matter, and this Plan is a direct response to what you have told us. Together, we are working to ensure Waimakariri is a district where young people can belong, grow, and realise their potential.

— Mayor Dan Gordon



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## Introduction

**The Waimakariri Youth Action Plan 2026–2029 is the result of a review of Council's previous Youth Strategy 2018. For the purpose of this work, 'youth' is defined as those in the 12-to-24-year-old age range.**

Work to review the Youth Strategy commenced in October 2024, earlier than previously indicated. This was done in recognition of the significant level of social and demographic changes experienced by our young people over this time period.

These social changes include, but are not limited to, the impact of a global pandemic, overrepresentation of Waimakariri youth in local mental health statistics, changing education and employment environments, the continuing emergence of technological advancements, climate change, and an aging population focus.

In terms of demographic changes, the Youth Strategy 2018 was modelled on Census data from 2013 which showed that the Waimakariri youth population at that time was 7,923 12-to-24-year-olds.

Between 2013 and 2018, there was a 14.95% increase in the District's youth population. There was another 4.9% increase between 2018 and 2023 amounting to a total of 9,555 youth in the District as of 2023 Census data, demonstrating a clear need for this work to be updated.

The Waimakariri Youth Action Plan 2026–2029 is shaped by this social and demographic context, alongside a significant level of input from local youth themselves. The eight themes outlined in the Action Plan aim to address the issues, challenges, and aspirations highlighted during this process, whilst aligning with relevant strategic frameworks.





# Purpose

## Approach

The Waimakariri Youth Action Plan provides a coordinated and collaborative framework for working alongside community partners, education providers, whānau, and, most importantly, young people, for the betterment of local youth development. Its purpose is to guide collective action towards achieving the identified outcomes for youth across the Waimakariri District. Implementation of the Plan will be informed by best practice community development principles and Positive Youth Development approaches, including Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa.

The Plan is structured around eight key themes identified through the Early Engagement Survey: Health, Recreation, Environment,

Employment, Belonging, Spaces and Places, Engagement, and Sector Support. These themes collectively form a holistic foundation for this work and reflect the priorities and aspirations of local young people.

## Intended Outcomes

By adopting a holistic approach, the Plan aims to strengthen connections, expand opportunities, and enhance support networks for young people within the District. As actions across the eight thematic areas are implemented, young people will be better supported to become connected, engaged, and resilient members of the community. In turn, they will be better equipped to contribute positively to the social, cultural, environmental, and economic wellbeing of the Waimakariri District.



## Funding

The Youth Action Plan is all about working together. In line with good community-led development practice and a well-rounded approach to the development of a young person, funding for each project will be decided collaboratively by stakeholder working groups during planning. This ensures activities are well-resourced, sustainable, and reflect best practice. When planning, we look at what each partner can contribute, whether that's time, skills, spaces, or financial support. We also explore opportunities for philanthropic funding, central government grants, and sponsorship to make projects happen.

Council plays its part too, usually through in-kind support. This includes community development

facilitation, provision of meeting spaces, promoting activities, and assisting with planning, delivery, and evaluation of actions.

This is accounted for through the Youth Development Portfolio Budget. Every point in this plan has been shaped using this collaborative and resource-conscious approach, because together, we can support local young people to thrive. Through its Long Term Plan, Council makes indirect financial contributions to key local community organisations whose mandate includes working with youth.

The Waimakariri District Council also extends its thanks to the external funders who have supported youth development in the Waimakariri District since its inception in 2010.







## Working Together

### Partnerships

Responsibility for delivery of the Plan sits across multiple Council units, with each action assigned a designated lead agent. Lead agents will work in partnership with identified possible collaborators to progress actions and achieve shared outcomes.

Although its content has been formally adopted by Council, the Plan remains open to additional or emerging community organisations that wish to contribute. Levels of influence and involvement among collaborators will vary and are reflected within the Youth Development Ecosystem (illustrated on page 7).

### Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Whitiara Centre Limited

The Waimakariri District sits within the takiwā (territory) of Ngāi Tūāhuriri, which is one of 18 Ngāi Tahu regional papatipu Rūnanga.

Ngāi Tūāhuriri are recognised as mana whenua, with Whitiara Centre Limited acting as a conduit for communicating Rūnanga interests. A Partnership Agreement between Whitiara Centre Limited and the Council was signed in 2025. Whitiara Centre has the operational role of driving positive change for Ngāi Tūāhuriri through strategic partnerships and advisory services, including working in partnership with Council on projects like the Youth Action Plan.





## Youth Development Ecosystem



### Layers of Influence

1. Immediate
2. Local Community
3. Regional
4. National

### Possible Collaborators

Waimakariri  
 Community Wellbeing North Canterbury  
 Waimakariri Health Advisory Group  
 Waimakariri Access Group  
 Social Services Waimakariri  
 North Canterbury Sport & Recreation Trust  
 Sport Canterbury  
 Regional Sporting Organisations  
 Waimakariri Biodiversity Trust  
 Silverstream Reserve Volunteers  
 Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust  
 Environment Canterbury  
 Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs  
 North Canterbury Youth Futures  
 Ministry of Social Development  
 Enterprise North Canterbury  
 WaiYouth  
 Student Volunteer Army  
 Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri  
 Youth Voice Canterbury  
 Global Locals of Waimakariri  
 Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group  
 Waimakariri District Council  
 Waimakariri Youth Council  
 Hurunui District Council  
 North Canterbury Youth Services Network  
 Youth Voice Canterbury – ReVision

WMK  
 CWNC  
 WHAG  
 WAG  
 SSW  
 NCRST  
 RST  
 RSOs  
 WBT  
 SRV  
 Tūhaitara Trust  
 ECan  
 MTFJ  
 NCYSN  
 MSD  
 ENC  
 WY  
 SVA  
 Ngāi Tūāhuriri  
 YVC  
 GLOW  
 WWWG  
 WDC  
 WYC  
 HDC  
 NCYSN  
 YVC – ReVision



## Acknowledgements

The Waimakariri District Council would like to acknowledge the various stakeholders involved in the development of the Youth Action Plan, including education providers, community organisations, youth service providers, and the 1,100 young people who participated in the early engagement survey.

The Council would also like to acknowledge the work of the Youth Action Plan Advisory Group, with representatives from a range of youth-oriented organisations. Membership included Waimakariri Youth Council, ComCol North Canterbury, Sport Canterbury,

Waimakariri Access Group, Kaiapoi High School, Rangiora New Life School, Mahi Mātātoa, and Noaia Charitable Trust.

The Advisory Group met regularly throughout this process and leant their views and insights to the development of this Plan. From co-designing the early engagement process alongside Council staff, to the adoption of the final Youth Action Plan 2026-2029, the group played an important role in the success of this Plan. The Council would also like to thank the Youth Action Plan Advisory Group for their endorsement of the final Plan.

## Strategic Context

### Waimakariri District Council

The Council has a statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 2002 to identify Strategic Priorities and Community Outcomes that reflect the needs and aspirations of local residents.

Across its eight themes and identified actions, the Waimakariri Youth Action Plan 2026-2029 aligns with Council's social, cultural, environmental and economic Community Outcomes. Additionally, the objectives of the Action Plan are closely associated with Council's strategic priority to, "enhance community wellbeing, safety, inclusivity and connectedness".

The diagram depicted on the next page shows the Council's Strategic Framework that informs the delivery of a wide range of Council services, including infrastructure planning, business development, community services, and environmental stewardship. This work is underpinned by robust community engagement, evidence analysis, and alignment with national and regional planning.

The Waimakariri Community Development Strategy is one of the Council's key strategies.





## The Community Development Strategy 2025–2035:

**The objectives of the Community Development Strategy encompass all aspects of the Council's Community Outcomes.**

The Strategy's objectives ensure that Waimakariri is a District where people are:

- Safe, healthy, and able to access the determinants of good health and wellbeing
- Welcome and included, as part of our local communities, both geographic and 'of interest'
- Informed and empowered to contribute to local decision making and achieve their aspirations
- Engaged and connected into the District's activities

### Related Plans

To address the broad range of community development activities and initiatives, several plans have been developed giving effect to specific priorities in both the Community Development Strategy and the Long Term Plan.

### Community Development Strategy

The Youth Action Plan is one of several plans within the Community Development Strategy as shown below.





## Influencing Factors

Alongside what our local young people told us, we have also looked at the bigger picture nationally. These influencing factors have reinforced the priorities identified by local young people and further highlighted the value of this work. These have been framed in line with the eight themes in the Action Plan, which were identified through extensive engagement with Waimakariri youth. To access the sources used in this section, please see the References section (page 89).

### Health

Te Hiringa Mahara – Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission reports that, in 2022/23, one in five young people aged 15–24 have

experienced high psychological distress, with youth less likely than other age groups to receive professional support when needed.

Māori, Pasifika, disabled, and LGBTQIA+ youth are disproportionately impacted, and factors such as lower household income, unmet basic needs, and inequities in service access continue to shape youth mental health outcomes. Also impacting health and addictive tendencies are encounters with disturbing or aggressive online media and unsafe content, such as pornography. Alongside addictive substances, exposure to these kinds of materials have been shown to negatively influence wellbeing, attitudes, and expectations.

### Recreation

Recreation remains an important part of young people's lives, but participation is shaped by age, cost, and access to activities. Youth physical activity is declining in New Zealand, with fewer than half of 15-to-24-year-olds meeting activity thresholds in 2024. Participation in organised sport also drops sharply in the mid-teen years as time pressures and interests change, leading many young people to prefer more flexible, low-cost, informal options.

### Environment

International evidence shows climate change is a significant source of anxiety for many young people, with widespread concern, pessimism about the future, and impacts on daily functioning. Research also links inaction on climate change with poorer youth mental health. Youth development offers a practical response by enabling young people to have a voice and take part in local, meaningful climate action. This has been shown to help to reduce anxiety, build confidence, validate their concerns, and support them to shape a more positive future.





## Employment

Across Aotearoa New Zealand, around 12–13% of young people aged 15–24 are not in employment, education, or training (NEET), with rates increasing during periods of economic downturn and a tightening labour market. National labour market data shows that young people are disproportionately affected by rising unemployment, increased competition for entry-level roles, and reduced availability of apprenticeships and early career opportunities, particularly during economic slowdowns.

## Belonging

Belonging is strengthened through social connection, cultural identity, acceptance, and safe, supportive environments. When young people feel grounded in their culture and values, they are more likely to feel accepted, safe, and connected within their communities. Canterbury Wellbeing Index data shows young people aged 18–24 report the highest levels of loneliness in the population, markedly higher than older age groups.

## Spaces and Places

Research suggests that the inability to access public spaces and places has a significant impact on the development and wellbeing of young people in Aotearoa. They provide opportunities for physical activity, mental health support, and social connections. Youth friendly places and spaces are defined by how young people experience them, rather than simply their appearance. They are safe, welcoming, affordable, accessible, and codesigned with young people to support connection, identity, creativity, and wellbeing.

The Youth Voice Canterbury - Youth Takeover Survey in 2024 highlighted access to transport as one of the top five significant issues for young people across the Canterbury region. Lack of transport impacts significantly on the ability of local rangatahi to engage in recreation and social connection. It is also the most significant barrier to employment for local young people.

International research shows a strong link between civic engagement and youth wellbeing, resilience, and positive development. Participation in civic life helps young people build leadership skills, critical thinking, and social connections, while strengthening their sense of identity and ability to influence decisions that affect them. Supporting young people to have a civic voice not only benefits their development but also strengthens democratic systems by ensuring youth perspectives and lived experience contribute to more inclusive, representative, and future focused community solutions.

## Sector Support

Government strategies such as the Youth Plan: Voice, Leadership, Action emphasise that positive outcomes for youth depend on a well-resourced, connected, and capable youth sector, with collaboration between government, councils, and community providers identified as essential for delivery. This is reinforced by the Youth Development Ecosystem evidence review, which found that

coordinated networks, shared frameworks, and workforce development improve consistency, equity, and effectiveness across youth services, while reducing duplication and service gaps.

These findings highlight that sector support plays a critical role in strengthening pathways across wellbeing, education, employment, and civic participation.

The Mana Taiohi framework further confirms the need for sector wide support, identifying skilled practitioners, strong relationships, and collaboration as foundational to effective youth development practice. Evidence from Mana Taiohi implementation and wider youth development research shows that investment in workforce capability and sector coordination improves service quality, strengthens youth engagement, and delivers better long term outcomes, while functioning as preventative infrastructure that reduces reliance on crisis responses. Councils play a key enabling role within this ecosystem by convening local networks and supporting place based collaboration.

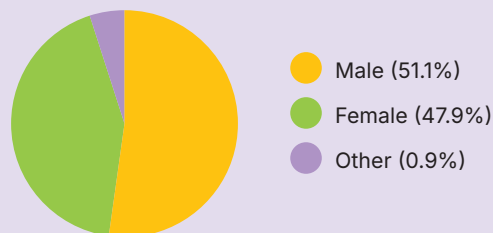


## Who are Waimakariri Youth?

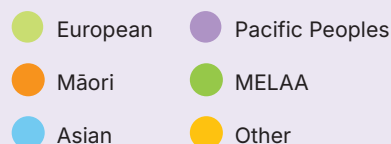
**2013–2018**  
Waimakariri's  
youth population  
increased by 14.95%

**2018–2023**  
it increased again by 4.9%

**What gender do Waimakariri  
youth identify as?**



**What ethnicity do Waimakariri  
youth identify as?**



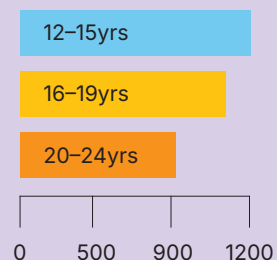
As of 2023 an estimated

**9,555**

12-to-24-year-olds  
live in Waimakariri

Accounting for approx. 14.4%  
of the District's population

**Waimakariri youth  
by age group**



**Data Source: Usually Resident Population Count Census 2023**

## Youth Action Plan Early Engagement Survey Overview

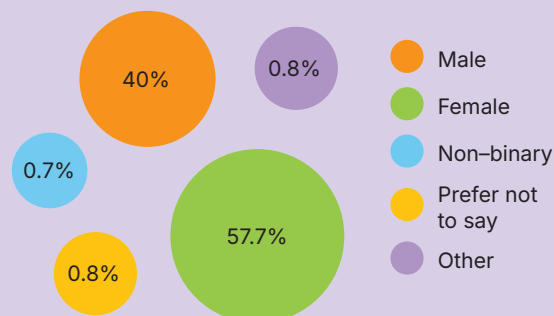
Between 18 May and 13 July 2025, the Waimakariri District Council undertook early engagement with local 12-to-24-year-olds to better understand their changing needs, challenges, and aspirations.

This information formed the basis for the development of the Youth Action Plan 2026-2029.

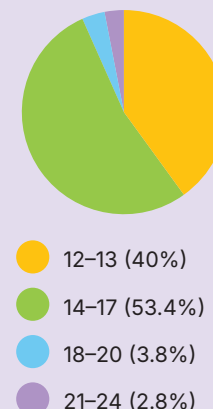
Across all collection methods, Council engaged with 1,112 local 12-to-24-year-olds, accounting for 11.6% of the Districts' total youth population.

**We heard from 1091 young people through  
the survey alone. Of these responses...**

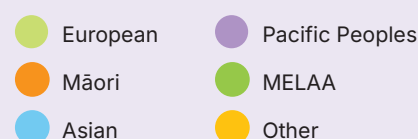
**What gender do our respondents identify as?**



**We heard from a range  
of different age groups:**



**What ethnicity do our  
respondents identify as?**







### What were their main messages?

**Waimakariri youth care about the collective social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing of their peers and their communities.**

**Waimakariri youth have different experiences based on their location within the District, most notably when it comes to urban verses rural localities.**

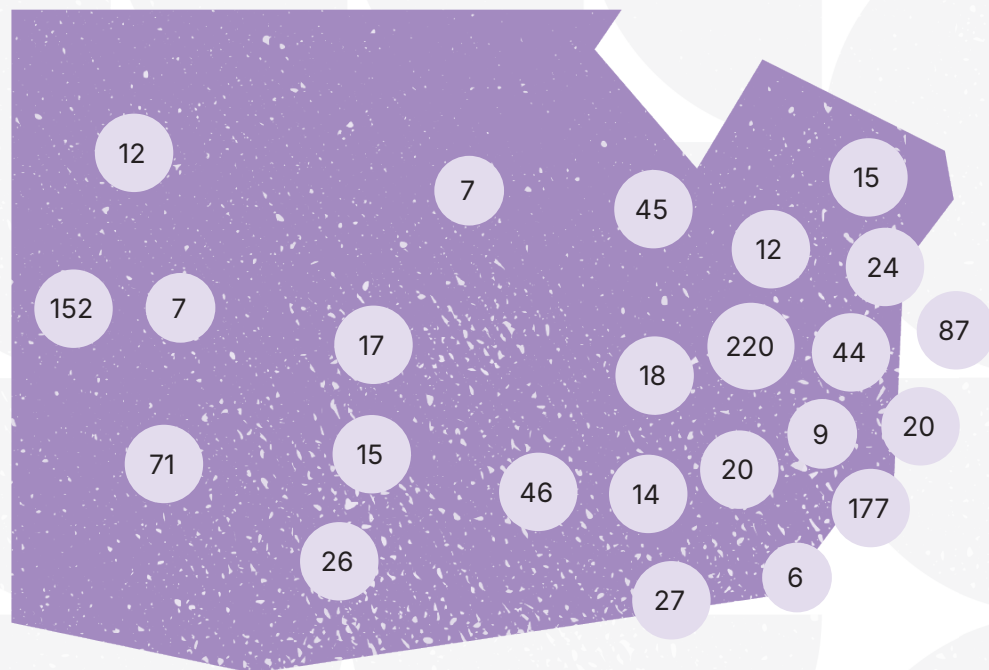
**Waimakariri youth show interest in a range of different topics and issues, from sports and physical activity to roading and transport, when engaged with in a meaningful way that meets them where they are.**

**Waimakariri youth want to engage with Council when it comes to topics of significance to them, and they appreciate the opportunity to make their voices heard.**



## Who shaped the Youth Action Plan?

This map shows where in the Waimakariri District these young people are from, demonstrating the range of urban and rural youth voices represented throughout this Action Plan.



|     |              |    |              |    |                 |     |           |
|-----|--------------|----|--------------|----|-----------------|-----|-----------|
| 71  | Rural        | 20 | Pegasus Bay  | 45 | Loburn          | 9   | Tuahiwi   |
| 220 | Rangiora     | 15 | West Eyreton | 12 | Ashley          | 152 | Oxford    |
| 15  | Sefton       | 44 | Woodend      | 87 | Pegasus         | 46  | Swannanoa |
| 24  | Waikuku      | 26 | Eyrewell     | 7  | Starvation Hill | 27  | Eyreton   |
| 12  | Ashley Gorge | 14 | Mandeville   | 17 | Cust            | 20  | Ohoka     |
| 7   | Okuku        | 6  | Clarkville   | 18 | Fernside        | 177 | Kaiapoi   |





# Development of the Youth Action Plan 2026–2029

## October 2024

The Waimakariri District Council began reviewing its 'Youth Strategy 2018' with the goal of developing a Youth Action Plan in its place. This review was in response to significant social and demographic changes experienced by local young people and was guided by a dedicated Project Control Group.

## March 2025

The first major milestone for the project was forming the Youth Action Plan Advisory Group to ensure youth voice and insights from service providers helped shaped the plan.

Facilitated by Council staff, the group met regularly throughout the development of the project to provide guidance and feedback.

## April 2025

Working alongside the Advisory Group, a co-designed early engagement process was launched with the aim of better understanding the challenges and priorities of local youth, to form the basis for draft actions. This phase was considered critical to the project's success, with the Advisory Group playing an instrumental role in shaping ways to engage meaningfully with local youth.

## May—July 2025

Early engagement ran for eight weeks and included an in-depth survey, interactive workshops, and social media outreach. The survey, covering ten key themes, was the primary tool used for gathering youth insights.

To maximise reach, Council partnered with schools and education providers, attended youth events, and worked with young people directly to identify the best locations for QR code posters and social media content.

## August—September 2025

The use of mixed engagement methods ensured a large response, with 1,112 young people having their say. Feedback highlighted key issues, opportunities, and priorities for local youth. Many also provided detailed written insights, offering a rich understanding of their experiences and perspectives. Council staff then began analysing these responses and shared these learnings during an external stakeholder engagement evening to ensure that decision makers, youth service providers, and the wider community are well aware of these issues and how they can make a difference.

## October—December 2025

Analysis of the 1,112 responses to the early engagement process for this project directly informed the development of the draft Youth Action Plan 2026–2029. The first step was to set out the themes that needed to be included in the document, followed by specific goals and actions. This involved conversations across Council units, as well as with external organisations and youth service providers. The draft was then shared with the Youth Action Plan Advisory Group and Project Control Group for their feedback and workshopping to prepare for consultation.

## February—July 2026

Public consultation on the Draft Plan was undertaken between February and March, with feedback received from community members and organisations. Following this, staff went on to analyse the feedback and made the appropriate amendments to the Plan. In May and June, Staff presented the updated Plan to the Youth Action Plan Advisory Group, Project Control Group, and Community and Recreation Committee. The final version of the Youth Action Plan was reported and presented to Council in July, where it was formally adopted.





# Health

**Goal: Waimakariri youth are enabled to thrive mentally and physically and have access to essential wellbeing services.**

## What young people told us about health:

To better understand how local youth feel about health, we asked them a range of questions relating to mental and physical health, as well as addiction.

The majority of survey respondents told us that mental health is very important to them, with 75.7% going on to note that they think mental health is something Waimakariri youth are actively struggling with. It was also clear that a number of our young people are unsure or do not know how to access local mental health services at 37.8%. Older youth stood out in this category with those in the 18-to-24-year-old group reporting that they face barriers when accessing mental health services, in particular, cost of services and long wait times.

Older youth also had the highest percentage reporting the same

barriers for accessing physical health services, highlighting that young people in the 18-to-24-year-old group may require more support in this space. However, it was clear that respondents were more confident that they know how to access physical services in comparison to mental health services.

At 91.2%, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents stated that they feel addiction is an issue that affects young people living in Waimakariri. When asked to elaborate on specific addiction challenges, 89.3% told us that vaping is a significant issue for youth, followed by social media at 77.4%, alcohol at 66.4% and drug use at 64.1%. These responses were a clear indicator that our young people need more support when it comes to addiction.



**"I'm worried about the cost and lack of support, and I don't want my family to worry if I'm sick or need care"**  
18-to-20-year-old, Eyrewell

Seen ✓

**"Mental health is very serious, and we should make more awareness of it"**  
12-to-13-year-old, Swannanoa

Seen ✓

**"Young people dealing with addiction can benefit from community support, education, and accessible services, including peer groups, counselling, and mental health programmes"**  
18-to-20-year-old, Eyrewell

Seen ✓

## Action 1: Promote the availability of mental and physical health services within the District

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Conduct mapping of current mental health services available to young people across the District, including but not limited to; Kaupapa Māori services, disability services, and culturally responsive youth health providers, with a focus on identifying gaps in service provision and future opportunities to strengthen equitable access for young people
2. Work collaboratively to ensure that the range of mental and physical health services in the District are publicised in priority youth spaces and online platforms used by youth
3. Ensure that online resources that promote local services, such as the Next Steps webpage, are easily accessible to youth and promoted on Council platforms
4. Following service mapping, ensure outcomes are in alignment with iwi established health priorities for rangatahi, as outlined in the Te Tauraki Health Plan, specifically with regard to accessing preventative and clinical mental health services

### Success indicators

1. Youth are:
  - More informed of availability of mental health service
  - Able to find and access the right services
  - Receiving wrap around support from mental and physical health services when in need
2. Youth and health service providers are well connected and informed about each other's offerings

### Possible collaborators

- Communications and Engagement Team
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Social Services Waimakariri
- North Canterbury Youth Services Network
- Waimakariri Health Advisory Group
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

- Community Development Strategy 2025–35
- Te Tauraki Health Plan (Ngāi Tahu)

## Action 2: Investigate opportunities to work with key partners in addressing addiction issues facing local youth

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Year 1 & 2

### Sub-actions

1. Inform key partners about Youth Action Plan survey results on addiction and facilitate initial conversations around next steps
2. Provide support as needed to the projects that result from conversations with these key partners

### Success indicators

1. Key community partners are more informed, connected, and empowered to address addiction issues facing local youth
2. Key projects to address local youth addiction issues have begun and are well supported

### Possible collaborators

- Community Wellbeing North Canterbury
- Social Services Waimakariri
- Local high schools and education providers
- Alcohol and Drug Harm Steering Group
- North Canterbury Youth Services Network
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Local Police
- Noaia Charitable Trust
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

- Community Development Strategy 2025–35
- Engaging the Community for Alcohol Action Plan

## Action 3: Facilitate opportunities to educate sector providers in relation to youth health and addiction

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Success indicator

Youth and health service providers are informed about key trends and issues impacting youth in Waimakariri

### Possible collaborators

- Social Services Waimakariri
- North Canterbury Youth Services Network
- Waimakariri Health Advisory Group
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35





# Recreation

**Goal: Waimakariri youth are satisfied with and have increased access to local sports and recreation opportunities**

## What young people told us about recreation:

To help inform service provision across the District, we asked local young people to tell us about their thoughts on sports, physical and recreational activities, and their hobbies.

At 91.6%, the vast majority of respondents told us that sports and physical activities are somewhat to very important to them. Team sports were very clearly popular amongst our young people; however, it was noted that interest in team sports seemed to decrease as age increased.

In terms of satisfaction with current sports offerings in Waimakariri, the majority of respondents told us they are only somewhat satisfied at present, with rural communities reporting a higher level of dissatisfaction. Once again, cost was seen as the most prevalent barrier to accessing these opportunities.

Young people told us that they want to see more support for social sport offerings, opportunities to be involved with club and school sports for those not in traditional education settings, and increased access to speciality sports within the District for youth with disabilities.

Young people also told us about their hobbies and the things they do in their spare time. 85.8% of respondents told us they most enjoy hanging out with their friends, reinforcing the idea that our young people value these relationships with their peers.

Interestingly, 70.9% of 21–24-year-olds told us that they are more likely to partake in activities that have mental health benefits as well. Themes of creativity, expression, and freedom also came through in comments, as well as the need for more local, accessible activities for young people to partake in.

**"Many buses don't travel to our area as we live more rurally compared to cities like Christchurch and Rangiora, and with more public transport it would be much easier to participate in physical activities"**

**12-to-13-year-old, Eyreton**

**Seen ✓**

**"It would be better if there were more things for teenagers to do out here, so we don't have to travel into Christchurch. I have noticed that there are more and more teenagers joining the gym because that is one of the few things we can do to keep us busy. I suggest a youth group or something along those lines"**

**14-to-17-year-old, Rangiora**

**Seen ✓**

**"Make opportunities like these cheaper for more NZ youth to participate in, without worries or boundaries like cost"**

**14-to-17-year-old, Oxford**

**Seen ✓**

## **Action 1: Collaborate with local sport and recreation providers to investigate broader offerings**

**Lead agents** Greenspace Unit and Community Team

**Timeline** Year 1 & 2

### **Sub-actions**

1. Connect with staff working on the development of a Play, Active Recreation, and Sports Strategy to better understand the gaps and opportunities for youth sport offerings in the District
2. Support opportunities for local youth to participate in accessible and inclusive sport offerings

### **Success indicators**

1. Local sport and recreation advisors and providers agree to address gaps identified in sport offerings
2. Local youth have access to a broader range of sport and feel more satisfied in this area
3. Youth with disabilities have opportunities to participate in local sport
4. Levels of service reflect community demand

### **Possible collaborators**

- North Canterbury Sport and Recreation Trust
- Local sports clubs
- Local cultural groups
- Waimakariri Access Group
- Sport Canterbury
- Halberg Foundation
- ParaFed Canterbury
- Special Olympics Canterbury
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### **Relevant documents**

- Play, Active Recreation and Sports Strategy (currently being developed)
- Community Development Strategy 2025–35
- Inclusive Waimakariri Plan 2025–28
- Community and Recreation Activity Management Plan



## Action 2: Investigate opportunities to remove barriers for young people to participate in sport and recreation

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Year 1 & 2

### Sub-actions

1. To better understand participation barriers, facilitate targeted conversations with:
  - Home schooling networks
  - Youth in rural areas
  - 18-to-24-year-olds
  - Rangatahi Māori
  - Pacific youth
  - Youth with disabilities
2. Following conversations with identified groups, provide feedback to sport and recreation providers, and advocate for more inclusive offerings

### Success indicator

Sport and recreation providers have increased awareness of barriers impacting youth participation and are motivated and empowered to address these issues where possible

### Possible collaborators

- North Canterbury Sport and Recreation Trust
- Sport Canterbury
- Mahi Mātātoa Trust
- Local schools and education providers
- Local sporting codes
- Comcol North Canterbury
- Noaia Charitable Trust
- R13 Trust
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- WaiYouth
- Waimakariri Access Group
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

- Community Development Strategy 2025–35
- Play, Active Recreation and Sports Strategy (currently being developed)

## Action 3: Facilitate the promotion of sport, recreation, and play opportunities for young people in Waimakariri

**Lead agents** Greenspace Unit and Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Investigate opportunities to attract additional sport, recreation, and play offerings and events in the District
2. Work collaboratively to ensure that the range of sports, physical and recreational activities, and hobbies in the District are publicised in priority youth spaces and online platforms used by youth

### Success indicators

1. Local youth have increased awareness of local sport and recreation opportunities
2. Additional opportunities for youth to be involved in sport, recreation and play become more readily available in the District

### Possible collaborators

- Communications & Engagement Team
- North Canterbury Sport and Recreation Trust
- Local sports clubs
- Sport Canterbury
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Waimakariri Access Group
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

- Community Development Strategy 2025–35
- Play, Active Recreation and Sports Strategy (currently being developed)

# Environment

**Goal: Waimakariri youth are informed on environmental issues impacting the District and feel equipped to make an impact**

## What young people told us about the environment:

We asked local young people to tell us how they feel about their natural environment in Waimakariri, and issues that concern them. The vast majority of survey respondents told us that the natural environment is important to them, with 71.1% telling us that they think it is very important for their local community to be protecting the environment.

It was also clear in survey results that our youth are interested in being involved in activities which help our natural environment into the future.

Furthermore, at 55%, the majority of respondents told us that environmental issues do worry them, sending the message that our young people are concerned about environmental issues and the impact these may have on the natural environment. In their comments, young people told us that they feel a desire for information to be more readily available and accessible to them.





**"Maybe promote these cleanups or tree plantings more, because I don't see many ads for cleanups, but would be happy to go if I saw that they were being hosted"**

**12-to-13-year-old, Eyrewell**

**Seen ✓**

**"I think the natural environment is important as we need to preserve what we have so we can have better futures"**

**14-to-17-year-old, Kaiapoi**

**Seen ✓**

**"I think it is important to live in a clean natural environment"**

**14-to-17-year-old, Rangiora**

**Seen ✓**

## Action 1: Facilitate and promote opportunities for youth-led environmental activities

**Lead agents** Greenspace Unit, Community Team and Solid Waste Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Take a creative communications and planning approach to increase youth participation in environmental activities
2. Ensure that information regarding upcoming environmental events and activities are available and accessible to a youth audience.
3. Ensure that the Waimakariri Youth Council continues to be supported in their delivery of youth-led planting days, river clean ups, and other environmental activities
4. Enable opportunities for local young people to create their own environmental communications, such as youth-led and directed videos, which provide them with a platform to express their thoughts on environmental topics of their choosing

### Success indicators

1. Multiple youth-led environmental events and initiatives happen each year
2. The number of youth involved in these events increases

### Possible collaborators

- Communications & Engagement Team
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Ashley Rakahuri River Care Group
- Environment Canterbury
- Eco Educate
- WaiYouth
- Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust
- EnviroSchools
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Noaia Charitable Trust
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

- Community Development Strategy 2025-35
- Natural Environment Strategy

## Action 2: Investigate new opportunities for sustainable practices in the District

**Lead agent** Solid Waste Team

**Timeline** Year 2 & 3

### Sub-actions

1. Investigate new opportunities for sustainable practices that youth can be involved in, and sustain current offerings
2. Investigate the possibility of an extension of take back schemes in the wider District

### Success indicator

The Council incorporates more sustainability initiatives throughout the District, making it an eco-friendlier place

### Possible collaborators

- Community Team
- Eco Educate
- Greenspace Unit
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Waste Management and Minimisation Plan 2018





### Action 3: Facilitate opportunities for youth environmental advocacy at the District, Regional and National level

**Lead agents** Greenspace Unit, Community Team and Strategy & Business Unit

**Timeline** Ongoing

#### Sub-actions

1. Ensure that submissions made by Council on environmental matters take into account the feedback received by local young people through the Youth Action Plan survey and other relevant surveys/data
2. Support the Waimakariri Youth Council's advocacy work through sharing relevant advocacy opportunities and by peer reviewing submissions
3. Create new opportunities for a diverse range of youth to be involved in environmental strategic development.
4. Ensure that information relating to environmental issues, collated by Council, can be shared with young people in a way that is accessible, and easy to understand

#### Success indicator

Local youth voices are represented on a range of environmental issues and projects

#### Possible collaborators

- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Local environmental advocacy groups
- Communications & Engagement Team
- Waimakariri Biodiversity Trust
- Youth Voice Canterbury
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

#### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025-35

### Action 4: Explore new ways to share information and empower youth about environmental issues and projects

**Lead agents** Communications & Engagement Team, Strategy & Business Unit and Greenspace Unit

**Timeline** Ongoing

#### Success indicator

Youth feel more informed about local environmental issues and actions that Council is taking through increased access to information, and regular updates on media platforms

#### Possible collaborators

- Community Team
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Solid Waste Team
- Eco Educate
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

#### Relevant document

Natural Environment Strategy

# Employment

**Goal: Waimakariri youth are aware of local career pathways, connected to local employers, and are supported to be work ready**

## What young people told us about employment:

We asked young people to tell us about their experiences with seeking employment within Waimakariri to better understand the challenges they are facing. It was clear that the most significant barrier is the lack of available jobs locally, with 57% of survey respondents noting this.

This was followed by 47.1% stating lack of experience, and 29.7% percent mentioning access to transport as barriers. The inter-related nature of these challenges is significant.

In order to address these issues, young people told us that opportunities such as in-person workshops and one-off opportunities to learn vocational skills, CV writing, and job interview etiquette would be helpful. Some young people also expressed concern that they feel there is bias against young people in the workplace, and that disability stigma impacts their ability to find employment in Waimakariri.

## Local context

10% of young people aged 15–24 in Waimakariri are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). One of the barriers that these local youth encounter is increased competition for entry level roles—particularly in tighter economic times.

On top of the District's relatively high local NEET numbers, the recent economic downturn has seen over 400 local youth requiring financial assistance from Work and Income, in the face of a tighter labour market and rising living costs. This has highlighted the need for ongoing investment in youth focused employment pathways, such as those facilitated through collaborations like North Canterbury Youth Futures and Council's Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs programme.



"I have applied to 100+ jobs and have only had 2 interviews but got denied both times, it's hard for me"  
14-to-17-year-old, Rangiora

Seen ✓

"In my area particular jobs are very hard to get because almost every student over 16 is going for the same 5-6 jobs in the town and it makes it incredibly difficult to get the job"

14-to-17-year-old, Eyreton

Seen ✓

"There's no good way of getting entry level jobs without knowing someone that owns a business, or someone who already works somewhere needing employees"

14-to-17-year-old, Pegasus

Seen ✓

## Action 1: Maintain participation in the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs programme

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Success indicator

Eligible Waimakariri youth are supported to find work through the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs programme

### Possible collaborators

- Ministry of Social Development
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025-35





## Action 2: Maintain opportunities for youth to intern across Council business units

**Lead agents** Community Team and Human Resources Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-action

Encourage the proactive sharing of internship opportunities across Council units with local young people.

### Success indicator

More Waimakariri youth are aware of and able to participate in Council internships

### Possible collaborators

- Council Units
- Communications & Engagement Team
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35





## Action 3: Facilitate workshops aimed at youth work readiness

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Mayors' Taskforce For Jobs to continue with learner licensing courses and other relevant work readiness workshops for clients
2. Support WaiYouth to host work readiness workshops for wider youth population
3. Support local education providers to deliver structured work readiness workshops on their campus

### Success indicator

Waimakariri youth are supported to learn skills that will increase their work readiness and employability

### Possible collaborators

- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Noaia Charitable Trust
- WaiYouth
- Enterprise North Canterbury
- Comcol North Canterbury
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 4: Facilitate a pilot 'Day in the Life' programme offering local youth the opportunity to apply for a one-day work experience in an area of interest within Council

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Year 1 or 2

### Sub-actions

1. Explore feasibility and confirm interest in a pilot programme across Council units
2. Youth Development Facilitator to work through logistics, draft a schedule for the day, and outline eligibility criteria/selection process to share with Council units and local high schools/education providers
3. Develop required communications collateral and ensure a wide range of local young people are aware of the opportunity
4. Review the success of the pilot programme and determine whether it is suitable to run annually

### Success indicators

1. The pilot programme runs with a high level of Council engagement and youth participation
2. Youth participants have increased awareness of Council functions and career pathways
3. Connections between local youth and Council are strengthened

### Possible collaborators

- Human Resources Team
- Participating Council Units
- Communications & Engagement Team
- Local high schools
- Local education providers
- Health and Safety Team
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

- Community Development Strategy 2025–35
- Volunteer Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

## Action 5: Facilitate the effective promotion of local volunteering opportunities

**Lead agent** Community Team and Waimakariri Youth Council

**Timeline** Year 1

### Sub-action

Collaborate with the Waimakariri Youth Council to roll out a volunteering opportunities campaign.

### Success indicator

More youth are aware of and connected to local volunteering opportunities

### Possible collaborators

- Communications & Engagement Team
- Community Wellbeing North Canterbury
- North Canterbury Youth Services Network
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35





## Action 6: Support the North Canterbury Youth Futures activities to highlight local career pathways

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-action

Facilitate and promote the North Canterbury Youth Futures Careers Expo, Business Breakfast, and Career Pathways activities

### Success indicators

1. The North Canterbury Youth Futures activities continue to grow
2. Local youth continue to gain awareness of local career pathways and connect with employers through North Canterbury Youth Futures activities

### Possible collaborators

- North Canterbury Youth Futures Working Group
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 7: Investigate alternative transport options to support youth employment opportunities

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Year 3

### Success indicator

Key partners are identified and committed to providing new transport pathways for young employees

### Possible collaborators

- Local Employers
- Community service providers
- North Canterbury Minibus Trust
- Local High Schools
- Comcol North Canterbury
- Noaia Charitable Trust
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

# Belonging

**Goal: Waimakariri youth have an increased sense of social and cultural belonging across the District**

## What young people told us about belonging:

We asked young people questions about how they feel being themselves in their local communities to better understand where there may be higher levels of need.

When asked if they feel accepted and included by their peers, 60% of survey respondents said they do, followed by 33.1% noting they only feel this way sometimes, and 6.9% stating they either do not feel this way or that they'd prefer not to say. It was noted that the feeling of acceptance seemed to trend upwards as the age of the young person increased as well.

83% of survey respondents told us that they view their culture as being somewhat to very important

to who they are. Following on from this, 55.1% of these respondents told us they feel supported and accepted by their community to be themselves in their cultural identity. However, 33.1% were unsure of how to respond to this question, and a further 11.9% stated that they do not feel this way. 89% told us that it is somewhat to very important to live in a community that includes people of multiple cultures, with only 11% disagreeing. Young people also expressed that they feel the Waimakariri District could be doing more to celebrate and promote cultural diversity, beyond just ticking a box.



**"You could have a Polyfest in Waimakariri or a big open Māori hāngi or community celebration. Maybe a get together even. It doesn't have to be big, you just have to feel noticed"**

**12-to-13-year-old, Pegasus**

**Seen ✓**

**"I think there's a bit of a way to go still when it comes to societal attitudes here when it comes to acceptance and inclusivity"**

**18-to-20-year-old, Rangiora**

**Seen ✓**

**"Celebrating and promoting cultural diversity is good, but I don't think it comes from higher up, but from those in the community"**

**14-to-17-year-old, Kaiapoi**

**Seen ✓**

## **Action 1: Ensure that the implementation of the Welcoming Waimakariri Plan also reflects the needs of young people**

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### **Success indicator**

The Welcoming Waimakariri Plan implementation represents and includes young people

### **Possible collaborators**

- Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### **Relevant documents**

- Welcoming Waimakariri Plan 2026–2029
- Community Development Strategy 2025–35



## Action 2: Facilitate accessible local opportunities for youth that promote inclusion, education and celebration of all cultures

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Work with Global Locals of Waimakariri to widen opportunities for youth involvement with the group's activities
2. Facilitate the Race Unity poster competition
3. Investigate additional offerings of youth targeted cultural events and activities
4. Promote the availability of locally based Kaupapa Māori services, Pacific services and culturally responsive services for migrant communities available to youth, to contribute to increased feelings of cultural inclusion

### Success indicators

1. Local youth have access to and are attending a range of cultural events and activities
2. Local youth feel more accepted, included, and welcome in Waimakariri

### Possible collaborators

- Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group
- Global Locals of Waimakariri
- Communications & Engagement Team.
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

- Welcoming Waimakariri Plan 2026–2029
- Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 3: Facilitate and promote youth social events and opportunities across the District to improve inclusion and connection

**Lead agents** Community Team and Greenspace Unit

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Support Waimakariri Youth Council and WaiYouth in running multiple youth-led events and activities each year
2. Collaborate with relevant Council teams to facilitate events and opportunities for youth during Youth Week

### Success indicators

1. Waimakariri Youth Council and WaiYouth events are well attended by local youth
2. Youth feel more included and connected across the community after attending these events

### Possible collaborators

- WaiYouth
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- North Canterbury Youth Services Network
- Communications & Engagement Team
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35



## Action 4: Ensure that youth voice is represented when designing meaningful pathways for cultural and social inclusion at Council

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Utilise responses to the Youth Action Plan survey in designing these pathways, and promote to relevant Council units for use in their work
2. Actively incorporate concepts such as Te Whare Tapā Wha and Hauora when exploring pathways for youth voice and cultural inclusion

### Success indicator

Youth are supported to have their voices represented at Council on topics related to cultural and social inclusion.

### Possible collaborators

- Waimakariri Youth Council
- WaiYouth
- Youth Voice Canterbury
- Relevant Council units
- Welcoming Waimakariri Working Group
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35





# Spaces and places

**Goal: Waimakariri youth have access to spaces and places in the District that are youth friendly, connected, safe, and inclusive**

## What young people told us about spaces and places:

We asked young people how they feel about public spaces in the Waimakariri District to better understand how they interact with our offerings and what we could be doing better. 92.3% of respondents told us that local public spaces are somewhat to very important to them. It was evident that our young people value having places where they are welcome, safe, and can enjoy hanging out with their friends. Some respondents noted that there is a lack of indoor spaces that are youth friendly and cost effective.

Young people stated a preference for public places to be served with places to sit and hang out with friends, accessible bathrooms, and Wi-Fi for safety reasons. On the topic of safety, the majority of respondents told us they feel somewhat safe in public spaces at 62%, followed by 23.9% who feel very safe, and 14.1% who either do not feel safe or were unsure.

There was a clear preference for outdoor spaces expressed by respondents, with parks and beaches in particular being mentioned.

Libraries were noted by some as safe spaces, whilst others touched on the importance of accessible playgrounds and sensory spaces.

We also wanted to understand how our young people get around the District, and how accessible public transportation services are to them. Unsurprisingly, 90.9% of survey respondents use a car as their main method of transportation, followed by walking and bussing.

Only 21.9% of respondents said they feel satisfied with the provision of public transportation services in their communities and was noted by both rural and urban based youth. To encourage them to use public transport, young people told us they would need better travel routes available where they live at 50.7%, followed by better connections between places they want to go at 45.9%.

Safety concerns were also expressed alongside comments on systems being hard to navigate, and the need for more effective youth targeted communications.



"I used to take buses everywhere but now that I have my own car it feels impractical when it takes three times as long to get anywhere"

18-to-20-year-old, Rangiora

Seen ✓

"One of my favourite places to go to is the Library mainly because it's sort of a safe haven for book geeks and the Waimakariri Libraries have a variety of things to do while your there"

12-to-13-year-old, Eyrewell

Seen ✓

"I would be more likely to use public transport if there were better measures to stop harassment and inappropriate behaviour. I have experienced people making comments about my appearance while in uniform, including from intoxicated individuals"

14-to-17-year-old, Rural

Seen ✓

## Action 1: Further develop the 'Waimakariri Youth Spaces' concept, which aims to increase young people's connection, agency, and sense of ownership of local spaces and places

**Lead agent** Community Team and Greenspace Unit

**Timeline** Year 2 & 3

### Sub-actions

1. Develop a project plan and establish a control group to progress the Waimakariri Youth Spaces concept
2. Create new opportunities for youth-led storytelling around spaces and places in the District, in particular, sites of cultural significance
3. Connect with community organisations, businesses and relevant Council Units to collate their facilities and offerings that youth can easily access
4. Investigate opportunities to develop branding for the Waimakariri Youth Spaces concept to be used in the community
5. Investigate areas for young people to create their own spaces and contribute to codesign processes

### Success indicators

1. The Waimakariri Youth Spaces concept is developed and executed
2. Local youth have increased sense of ownership and connection to local spaces and places

### Possible collaborators

- Strategy and Business Unit
- Communications & Engagement Team
- Property Unit
- Local businesses
- Community Organisations
- Enterprise North Canterbury
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Noaia Charitable Trust
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025-35

## Action 2: Work alongside youth audit service providers to proactively assess public spaces and places to improve youth friendliness

**Lead agents** Greenspace Unit and Community Team

**Timeline** Year 2 & 3

### Sub-actions

1. Encourage Waimakariri youth to train as Youth Audit Team Leaders to build local capacity
2. Based on feedback received through the Youth Action Plan survey, plan to undertake youth audits when reviewing pre-existing public spaces and developing new spaces
3. Embed the prioritisation of accessibility and inclusive design principles into the assessment of public spaces and places for youth friendliness, including the participation of disabled young people in co-design processes

### Success indicators

1. Priority local public spaces are assessed through youth audits, and plans to make them more youth-friendly are under development.
2. More local youth are trained to be Youth Audit Team Leaders

### Possible collaborators

- ReVision Initiative
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 3: Hold conversations with regional public transport providers to uplift the needs of Waimakariri youth, influence planning decisions, safety measures, and better publicise transport options

**Lead agents** Strategy & Business Unit and Community Team

**Timeline** Year 2

### Sub-actions

1. Proactively share transport relevant data from the Youth Action Plan survey, and other relevant surveys, with Environment Canterbury, Greater Christchurch Partnership, and other partners
2. Ensure Council submissions to transport relevant consultations take into account Youth Action Plan survey data
3. Further promote public transport options in the Waimakariri District, ensuring it can be easily understood by a youth audience.
4. Hold conversations internally at Council to advocate for more active mode transport options

### Success indicator

The transport needs of Waimakariri youth are represented to regional public transport providers and are reflected in their planning

### Possible collaborators

- Communications & Engagement Team
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Environment Canterbury
- Youth Voice Canterbury
- Roding Team
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant documents

- Community Development Strategy 2025–35
- Infrastructure Strategy 2021–51
- Integrated Transport Strategy 2035+



# Engagement

**Goal: Waimakariri youth are engaged with Council and have increased levels of civic awareness**

## What young people told us about engagement:

Although it wasn't directly mentioned in the Youth Action Plan early engagement survey, the importance of engaging with young people in general came up in qualitative comments and workshops. It was clear that local youth value the opportunity to connect with their Council and have a desire to deepen this connection through the Youth Action Plan itself.

The need for increased levels of civics awareness was also evident, highlighting the need to work more in this space to ensure our young people can be educated on what Council does, how it impacts them

and their whānau, and what they can do to make sure their voice is heard.

The number of young people engaged with through this project and the quality of their responses demonstrated to Council that this work can assist us when engaging with our young people into the future as well, beyond the ways we already seek to achieve this. This section of the Action Plan aims to recognise the connections we currently foster, as well as to broaden our efforts and entrench new ways of thinking about youth engagement.



**"Thank you for giving us a voice, we're not the most popular age range so I really appreciate this. 13-year-old me would be so happy"**

**14-to-17-year-old, Rangiora**

**Seen ✓**

**"I've had a good experience with the Waimakariri District Council. I've seen how they work hard to support the community, especially with their youth programmes and local initiatives. It's great to see a Council that listens to young people and invests in making the District a safe and positive place for everyone"**

**14-to-17-year-old, Rural**

**Seen ✓**

**"Thanks for giving me this survey and letting me express my own opinion!"**

**12-to-13-year-old, Starvation Hill**

**Seen ✓**

## Action 1: Support the Waimakariri Youth Council

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Ensure that Youth Council are enabled to communicate the interests and preferences of local young people to the Council in relation to:
  - The content of strategies, policies, plans, and bylaws
  - The processes and mechanisms for engagement with young people in the District
  - The consideration of regional issues raised by local young people
  - Consultation with local young people and the community
  - Any matter that the Youth Council considers to be of particular interest or concern to Waimakariri young people
2. Waimakariri Youth Council is supported to deliver events and activities addressing key priorities for local youth
3. Further develop Waimakariri Youth Council's online reach with local young people and their communities

### Success indicator

Waimakariri Youth Council is supported to represent the interests and preferences of local young people to the Council and to deliver activities addressing key youth priorities

### Possible collaborators

- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025-35



## Action 2: Support WaiYouth

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-action

WaiYouth are empowered to plan and execute social and educational events for local youth

### Success indicator

WaiYouth is able to deliver multiple well-attended events per year for local youth

### Possible collaborators

- WaiYouth
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 3: Support Youth Voice Canterbury initiatives

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Support Waimakariri Youth Council members to be actively involved in Youth Voice Canterbury projects and events
2. Support Youth Voice Canterbury with the delivery of the regional Youth Takeover Survey run annually

### Success indicators

1. Youth Voice Canterbury initiatives and activities are actively supported by Waimakariri Youth Council
2. Waimakariri youth voices are represented in the regional Youth Takeover Survey each year

### Possible collaborators

- Youth Voice Canterbury
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35



## Action 4: Facilitate and promote the Youth Service Award

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Success indicator

The Youth Service Award is delivered annually to recognise outstanding contributions to the community by local youth

### Possible collaborators

- Governance Team
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 5: Build capacity across Council Units to engage effectively with local youth

**Lead agents** Community Team

**Timeline** Year 1 & 2

### Sub-actions

1. Create a Council specific checklist for use by staff when running youth-targeted engagements to ensure effective communications and authentic engagement
2. Provide opportunities, such as 'lunch and learn' sessions, with Council staff to educate and train on how to best engage with youth

### Success indicator

Council Units are better equipped to engage effectively and meaningfully with youth

### Possible collaborators

- Communications & Engagement Team
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35





## Action 6: Proactively create opportunities for local youth to meaningfully engage with Council

**Lead agents** Community Team and Governance Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Enable and facilitate opportunities for local youth to take part in deputations to Council and participate in other Council processes relating to issues of importance to them
2. Reassess feasibility and delivery of the Youth Development Grant, to support youth leadership in the District

### Success indicators

1. Youth not currently involved with Waimakariri Youth Council or WaiYouth are actively engaging with Council
2. The Youth Development Grant is delivered

### Possible collaborators

- Local schools and education providers
- Strategy and Business Unit
- Communications & Engagement Team
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 7: Increase civic education levels for youth across the District

**Lead agents** Community Team and Governance Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-actions

1. Foster relationships with local education providers to enable broader youth understanding, engagement and participation in Council processes
2. Plan and execute an annual drop-in sessions programme aimed at local schools, education providers and youth organisations, focused on topics such as Long Term Plans, major consultations, etc.
3. Develop youth-focused communication materials, such as videos on social media platforms, around important Council functions and how Council works
4. Facilitate civics education activities annually during Youth Week on topics such as voting, how to make submissions, etc.
5. Explore pathways to increase youth voter awareness and turnout through youth-targeted campaigns prior to the next election period

### Success indicator

Local youth have an increased understanding of Council functions and broader civic awareness

### Possible collaborators

- Local schools and education providers
- Strategy and Business Unit
- Communications & Engagement Team
- Waimakariri Libraries
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

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# Sector support

**Goal: The Waimakariri youth sector is supported, connected, and trained to effectively address priority issues impacting youth.**

## Local context:

Through facilitation of the North Canterbury Youth Services Network, Council's Youth Development function provides a mechanism whereby local services and supports working with local youth can come together to network, learn and consider collaborative responses to locally identified issues and opportunities.

In recent years this collaborative approach has resulted in:

- The establishment of the North Canterbury Youth Futures working programme, which facilitates improved pathways for young people to access education and employment
- Provision of quality professional development for volunteers and paid workers in the local youth sector, ensuring best practice in service delivery that address the issues impacting on the mental, physical and cognitive wellbeing of local youth
- Research and preliminary work toward to establishment of a more youth-friendly Waimakariri District
- The development of a regular newsletter, to keep those working in the youth sector up to date with emerging issues, opportunities and information



**"There is a need for up-skilling and constant training to keep up with changes for our young people"**

**Youth Service Provider, education and trade training**

Seen ✓

**"We would be really keen to continue to build the connection with the Waimakariri Youth Council and see what additional things we can do together to ensure youth voice is heard throughout the District"**

**Youth Service Provider, advocacy and engagement**

Seen ✓

**"I am really keen to support and see how this progresses as a number of these initiatives touch on areas of our work, with the opportunity to gather some more useful youth insight into our operation"**

**Youth Service Provider, recreation**

Seen ✓

## Action 1: Facilitate the North Canterbury Youth Services Network monthly newsletter and quarterly training

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-action

Utilise local training providers where possible, including youth-led training on topics that youth are the subject matter experts

### Success indicator

The District's youth service sector feels well-trained, supported, and connected

### Possible collaborators

- Hurunui District Council
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 2: Promote opportunities for local youth sector service providers to access funding

**Lead agent** Community Team

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Success indicator

Local youth sector service providers are aware of opportunities for funding and how to access them

### Possible collaborator

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35

## Action 3: Collect and share data related to Waimakariri Youth with the wider youth services sector

**Lead agents** Community Team and Strategy & Business Unit

**Timeline** Ongoing

### Sub-action

Develop a platform that displays the Early Engagement Survey results that the sector can use for their programme design and funding applications

### Success indicators

1. The youth services sector is informed on key issues impacting youth in Waimakariri
2. The Youth Action Plan Early Engagement Survey results are utilised by local and regional organisations, influencing local programme delivery and application for funding

### Possible collaborators

- Youth Voice Canterbury
- Waimakariri Youth Council
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tūāhuriri

### Relevant document

Community Development Strategy 2025–35







## Monitoring and Evaluation

**This version of the Waimakariri Youth Action Plan has a three-year scope, with actions to be undertaken between July 2026 and June 2029.**

A three-year timeframe was decided upon to make sure that this document can be reviewed more regularly. This was done with the aim of ensuring that the ever-changing needs, aspirations, and issues encountered by local youth can be factored into updated actions, addressed as required.

The success of the Youth Action Plan 2026–2029 is dependent on Council's commitment to delivering on the actions contained in this document.

This will be achieved by:

- The establishment of a staff working group, comprised of relevant Council Unit representatives, to ensure that lead agents of the Youth Action Plan 2026–2029 are enabled to deliver on the actions outlined in this document through collaborative efforts
- The establishment of an external stakeholder group to ensure that regional and local stakeholders are kept informed and collaborative discussions can continue
- Annual check-ins to assess the progress of the Youth Action Plan 2026–2029, in line with timeframes indicated for each action
- An update on the progress of the Youth Action Plan 2026–2029 included in the annual Community Team 'Year in Review Report'
- An annual report presented to the Community and Recreation Committee in July 2027, 2028 and 2029
- Ensuring that the progress and completion of actions within this document are shared with local young people and the wider community to ensure accountability and transparency in completing this work



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